

Delta Plan Development

Summary

Preparation of the Delta Plan is being initiated with development of white papers and the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The Draft Delta Plan and Draft EIR will be prepared by June 2011, and the Final Delta Plan and Final EIR will be prepared by December 2011 to comply with Water Code Section 85300.

Background

The fundamental purpose of the Delta Plan is to ensure that state and local agencies meet the state's coequal goals for the Delta and all of the inherent subgoals defined by statute. As defined in the Delta Reform Act, the coequal goals "means the two goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. The coequal goals shall be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place."

The Delta Plan will define an integrated and legally enforceable set of policies, strategies, and actions that will serve as a basis for future findings of consistency by State and local agencies with regard to their Delta-related projects, and for subsequent evaluation of those findings by the Delta Stewardship Council (Council) on appeal, as provided in statute and Council regulation. The Delta Plan will be developed concurrently with the EIR so that information from the EIR can be used by the Council to develop the Delta Plan alternatives and subsequently the Delta Plan itself.

White papers are being prepared to describe historic and existing conditions and trends related to the Delta ecosystem, Delta flood risks, Delta emergency preparedness, water resources/water quality, and Delta land uses and socioeconomics. The Delta ecosystem and flood risk white papers (Attachments 1 and 2) will be presented at the October 2010 Council meeting. The remaining white papers will be presented at the November 2010 Council meeting. The white papers and comments on the white papers will be used to develop the Existing Conditions – or Environmental Setting – sections of the EIR and to identify opportunities and strategies for the Delta Plan alternatives. Public comments received on the white papers will be included in the Comment Tracking program.

Preparation of the Delta Plan EIR is beginning with the preparation of the Notice of Preparation (NOP). The NOP is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A preliminary version of the NOP was discussed at the September 2010 Council meeting. No public comments were received on that document.

The NOP (Attachment 3) has been expanded to describe:

- Environmental Baseline: Primary Planning Area within the Delta and a Secondary Planning Area in the Delta watershed and areas that use Delta water.
- Environmental Baseline: Study Period - staff recommend that the Delta Plan consider conditions and strategies that would extend through the Year 2100.
- Preliminary strategies to be considered in the Delta Plan alternatives to implement the policy objectives of SBX7 1.
- Methods to be completed in the EIR to identify and evaluate potential effects of the alternatives.
- Description of the scoping process.
- Preliminary list of responsible and trustee agencies who will be specifically invited to participate in EIR process.

Preparation of the Delta Plan and the EIR are continuing on schedule. The Draft Delta Plan and Draft EIR will be prepared by June 2011, and the Final Delta Plan and Final EIR will be prepared by December 2011 to comply with Water Code Section 85300.

The Comment Matrix is being used to categorize comments for preparation of the Delta Plan and EIR. The matrix that includes name of entity that submitted the comment, comment date, excerpt from the comment letter or email, and use of the comments in preparation of the documents. The October 2010 version of the matrix includes comments received between September 13, 2010 and October 15, 2010 (Attachment 4).

List of Attachments

Attachment 1 - Delta Ecosystem White Paper
Attachment 2 - Delta Flood Risk White Paper
Attachment 3 - Preliminary Notice of Preparation
Attachment 4 - Comment Matrix for Comments Received from September 13, 2010 through October 15, 2010

Contact

Terry Macaulay
Acting Deputy Executive Officer

Phone: (916) 445-5825